



# COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES OFFICE OF CHILD PROTECTION

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July 31, 2018

To: Supervisor Sheila Kuehl, Chair  
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From: Judge Michael Nash (Ret.)  
Executive Director

## PROGRESS UPDATE ON THE WORK OF THE OFFICE OF CHILD PROTECTION

In the final report of the Los Angeles County Blue Ribbon Commission on Child Protection (BRCCP), *The Road to Safety for Our Children*, two key recommendations were to “establish an entity to oversee one unified child protection system,” and for it to create a strategic plan for the work it will focus on. On June 10, 2014, the Board adopted the recommendations contained within that BRCCP final report and took action to establish the Office of Child Protection (OCP) as a separate entity reporting directly to the Board and located within the Executive Office. In October 2016, the OCP submitted to the Board its Countywide Child Protection Strategic Plan, which categorizes the work across five goal areas: prevention, safety, permanency, well-being, and cross-cutting approaches. It has submitted quarterly updates on its progress since August 1, 2016; this is a report on its progress since the last update submitted on April 30, 2018.

**GOAL 1: PREVENTION** *Provide children and families with the upfront supports and services they need to prevent them from entering the child welfare system and/or limit their involvement with the system once they are known to it.*

### Countywide Prevention Plan

- Implementing the OCP’s plan, *Paving the Road to Safety for Our Children: A Prevention Plan for Los Angeles County*. All workgroups aligned with the strategies for action are tackling their specific charges: networking the networks and measuring prevention are being led by First 5 LA, expanding home visitation is being led by the Department of Public Health (DPH), expanding early care and education is being led by the Policy Roundtable for Child Care and Development, prevention and aftercare network capacity and implementing the *Portrait of Los Angeles County* report recommendations are being led by the OCP.

- ✧ Networking the Networks Working with First 5 LA, DPH, the Department of Mental Health (DMH), the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services (WDACS), Prevention and Aftercare Networks (P&As), Children's Data Network, and the Policy Roundtable for Child Care and Development to identify strategies for enhancing connections and coordination across existing prevention networks
  - Survey results are being analyzed from 70 network responses to understand what kinds of prevention networks currently exist, identify network overlaps and gaps, learn how the networks connect with each other, and/or discover what barriers prevent them from making meaningful connections to others.
  - These 70 network responses identified and mapped over 500 prevention-related entities throughout the County (e.g., collaboratives, agencies, and organizations); of these, 30 lead organizations were identified for these operating networks.
- ✧ Prevention and Aftercare Network Capacity Working with the P&As to help reach families that could benefit from support as early as possible and to expand the capacity of families served
  - Worked with each of the P&A lead agencies to complete self-assessment surveys that were used to develop individual plans for each agency for strengthening their capacity and operations
  - On June, 6, 2018, the Board approved the expansion of the existing P&A contracts by \$19.6 million in DMH Mental Health Services Act Prevention and Early Intervention (MHSA-PEI) funding, over the next two years, for the networks to be trained in and provide healing-informed (formerly trauma-informed) services to families, and to add \$600,000 in one-time funding from the OCP for the networks to provide supports/services to families identified by DCFS' Hotline who have been evaluated out for their services, but who would benefit from being connected to community prevention supports.
  - Developed a curriculum for training the P&As in providing healing-informed supports and strengthening family engagement efforts
- ✧ Home Visitation Working with DPH, the Center for Strategic Public-Private Partnerships (CSPPP), First 5 LA, DMH, DCFS, Public Library, Probation Department, Department of Health Services (DHS), Department of Public Social Services (DPSS), Children's Data Network, Los Angeles Best Babies Network, and the LA County Perinatal and Early Childhood Home Visitation Consortium (Consortium) on developing a plan for expanding home visitation services available to vulnerable families
  - On July 18, 2018, DPH released its plan for home visitation expansion entitled, *Strengthening Home Visiting in Los Angeles: A Comprehensive Plan to Improve Child, Family, and Community Well-Being*. This plan lays out the

- vision for creating universally available home visitation programs for all new mothers who are interested in participating, including expanding evidence-based programs for families at risk of DCFS involvement and poor health outcomes, universal post-partum support and screenings, and improved coordination infrastructure to ensure that at-risk families connect timely to the right program. The plan also includes a countywide data-tracking framework, workforce-strengthening investments, and the identification of funding growth and sustainability opportunities.
- DPH and DMH are finalizing a budget request (to be made to the Board in the next few months) for allocating MHSA-PEI funding to expand home visiting capacity over the next two years; a Memorandum of Understanding is also being finalized.
  - Advocacy by DPSS and Los Angeles County community partners—using data from the DPSS/SHIELDS for Families, Inc., home visiting pilot discussed in our April 2018 update—successfully contributed to the State’s decision to include Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) dollars in the Fiscal Year 2018–2019 Governor’s Budget.
  - DMH and the Consortium have provided perinatal mental health training and supports (in accordance with the workforce-strengthening section of the home visitation plan) in four Service Planning Areas (SPAs), and are in the process of scheduling additional trainings in the remaining SPAs.
- ✧ Early Care and Education Working with the Policy Roundtable for Child Care and Development, First 5 LA, the Los Angeles Child Care Alliance, DCFS, DPH, the Commission for Children and Families, DMH, the Child Care Planning Committee, the Alliance for Children’s Rights, the Advancement Project, the Southern California Association for the Education of Young Children, P&As, the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE), the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), and others to create a roadmap for improving access to early care and education programs
- Identified an innovative model in San Francisco for blending funding, coordinating services, and improving quality of care across the continuum of services that shows promise for replication
  - Submitted a grant request to secure matching funding to conduct a comprehensive fiscal analysis of early care and education programs across Los Angeles County as a first step
- ✧ Measuring Prevention Working with First 5 LA, DMH, DCFS, Children’s Data Network, Chief Executive Office (CEO), DPH, DHS, LACOE, and other data experts to develop a set of standardized measures of prevention to evaluate the effectiveness of prevention-plan implementation efforts

- Developed a draft set of prevention measures across the outcome areas of pregnancy and early life health, safe children, child well-being, strong families, strong communities, and cost savings/avoidance, as well as a draft set of metrics and data sources for measuring them
- Designed a three-day workshop (September 25 through 27) that will be led by the Chief Information Office and Socrata, and involve multiple County departments and partner organizations. The purpose of the workshop is to develop a road map for implementing a performance measurement system for tracking prevention-related progress and outcomes.
- ✧ *A Portrait of Los Angeles County* Working with various entities—including the CEO, the City of Los Angeles, First 5 LA, DPH, DCFS, WDACS, Public Library, the Department of Parks and Recreation, the Probation Department, DPSS, Los Angeles Housing Services Authority (LAHSA), Children's Data Network, LACOE, CSPPP, Policy Roundtable for Child Care and Development, Child Care Planning Committee, Healthy Design Workgroup Grants Committee, Equity Workgroup, Weingart Foundation, Southern California Grantmakers, and the Center for Financial Empowerment—to monitor the overall well-being of communities and to support efforts that implement the report's recommendations
- Strategic engagement and outreach activities have continued with groups and agencies that affect all 10 of the priority investment areas identified in the report. The report has been disseminated to approximately 2,000 programs or organizations since its release in November 2018. Some uses of the Portrait report include:
  - The Department of Parks and Recreation is using the report findings to identify communities that would benefit most from expanded park access and programming.
  - Working with LACOE to overlay the county's school-district boundaries with report findings for 106 regional areas. LACOE is using this data to inform its planning efforts around community schools.
  - The Los Angeles County Arts Commission is using the report findings to complete an analysis demonstrating how arts-education funding is correlated with Human Development Index scores (HDI is the scoring algorithm used in the report).
  - The Community Development Commission is exploring the use of the report to help with its assessment of impediments to accessing housing and compliance with the Fair Housing Act.

**GOAL 2: SAFETY** *Minimize, if not eliminate, the risk that a child known to one or more entities in our system will be harmed.*

### **Risk Assessment and System Improvement Recommendation Implementation**

- Partnering with DCFS to implement the recommendations outlined by the OCP in its report of May 2017
  - ✧ A plan for implementing these recommendations over the next three years was developed in conjunction with the National Council on Crime & Delinquency (NCCD). On May 8, 2018, the Board approved an increase to the amount of an existing contract DCFS has with NCCD to support these activities.
  - ✧ A three-day kick-off event was held in May 2018 that included approximately 80 DCFS staff from various levels including line workers, supervisors, regional managers, and executive leadership. At the event, staff mapped out the different stages of receiving referrals, conducting investigations, and identifying key issues with the SDM tool and training needs. An analysis was also begun on DCFS' current SDM policies and where difficulties occur that need to be addressed.
  - ✧ A meeting is scheduled for August 7, 2018, to discuss the SDM risk assessment tool and the analytics behind its development.

### **DCFS Hotline Pilot**

- Launched a pilot project with DCFS' Hotline and the P&As on June 28, 2018, to serve families referred to the Hotline whose concerns do not warrant a DCFS investigation, but where an identified need exists that could be addressed through community-based prevention supports
  - ✧ Preliminary data suggests that, since the pilot began, significantly more referrals are being made to the P&As for families who could benefit from community resources (one agency reported that its referral rates have doubled, and another agency reported that its rate has tripled).

### **Use of Public Health Nurses (PHNs) in Child Welfare**

- The Child Welfare PHN (CWPHN) Steering Committee is continuing to meet to address issues resulting from the consolidation of the child welfare PHNs into DPH, including PHN workload, the termination of the CSW-PHN joint visitation pilot, and the role of the PHNs outstationed in the County's medical Hubs.
  - ✧ The CSW-PHN joint visitation pilot ended on June 30, 2018. However, DCFS' existing policy continues to allow joint visits to occur when needed.
  - ✧ The PHNs who were part of the joint visitation pilot project were re-assigned to the investigation side of the general Child Welfare PHN program, with their assignment locations remaining the same. DPH has not yet released their

workload study, as the business needs assessment is still pending completion. The study is anticipated to be released in late August.

### **Electronic Data-Sharing Efforts**

- Working with DCFS, the Chief Information Office (CIO), County Counsel, and the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) on the production of an electronic portal that would facilitate the electronic sharing of information relevant to an investigation of child abuse or neglect across 7 county departments and DCFS, based upon an MOU that the OCP finalized with the participating departments, County Counsel, and the Chief Executive Office (CEO)
  - ✧ Phase I of the Emergency Response Investigation Service (ERIS) has launched for emergency response workers in the following offices: Palmdale, Lancaster, Vermont Corridor, Santa Fe Springs, West L.A., Pasadena, and the Command Post.
  - ✧ Data accessible through Phase I of ERIS includes DCFS history and criminal background information. This data not only helps with streamlining DCFS investigations, but it also makes placing children with relatives more efficient when a removal is necessary.
  - ✧ Trainings for emergency response workers in DCFS' Glendora, Metro North, Santa Clarita, and Van Nuys offices are scheduled for August, and trainings for the remaining offices are targeted for August and September. The system is anticipated to be fully launched countywide in September 2018.
- Collaborated with the CEO, DCFS, Anthony & Jeanne Pritzker Family Foundation, Fullscreen Media, Think of Us, The Chronicle of Social Change, Binti, Sidebench, FosterMore/Children's Action Network, Raise A Child, Bixel Exchange, iFoster, the Alliance for Children's Rights, Teens Exploring Technology, First Place for Youth, ScaleLA, and others to hold a follow-up "Hack Foster Care LA+1" convening on May 24, 2018. This served as an opportunity to update participants on the progress made toward technology solutions that were proposed at last year's original Hackathon. It was widely attended by close to 250 representatives from technology, philanthropy, commissioners, advocates, community partners, County departments, the Juvenile Court, elected officials, and other key leaders in the child welfare arena. At this event, the OCP presented on the ERIS system developments, and the ECC and its partners presented on HopSkipDrive's mobile application now in use.

**GOAL 3: PERMANENCY** *No child leaves the system without a permanent family or a responsible caring adult in his or her life.*

### **Increasing the Use of Relative Placements**

- Continuing to monitor the progress of the upfront family-finding pilot project, launched in November 2016, that prioritizes placing children coming into foster care with relatives and non-offending parents, and is operational in four DCFS offices: Santa Fe Springs, Glendora, Vermont Corridor, and West L.A.
  - ✧ Results show that, of the more than 1,400 children detained in these four offices since the pilot began, approximately 80% of them have been placed with relatives and non-offending parents.
  - ✧ Discussions with DCFS are underway about expanding the pilot to additional regional offices over the next few months.

### **Permanency and Self-Sufficiency Planning for Transition-Age Youth (TAY)**

- On July 24, 2018, the CEO presented to the Board the multi-year countywide strategy to support the self-sufficiency goals of TAY foster youth at the earliest stages possible.
  - ✧ This strategy was developed collaboratively among multiple partners, including the OCP.
- The OCP is in the process of vetting its plan for increasing permanency for TAY and helping to reduce the number of youth who age out of foster care. The plan should be released in August.

### **Transitional Shelter Care (TSC) Pilot**

- Continuing to convene bi-weekly meetings with stakeholders—including DCFS, Probation, the Juvenile Court, Children's Law Center of California, Court-Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), the Violence Intervention Program (VIP), County Counsel, and others—to discuss the multidisciplinary teaming pilot led by DCFS' Accelerated Placement Team to stabilize and find permanency for hard-to-place youth (i.e., overstays and chronic repeaters) at TSCs
  - ✧ Discuss individual cases with regional social workers and their engagement teams so partners can help identify solutions to issues being raised
  - ✧ Recent examples of pilot youth and their progress:
    - JD has been stable in her supervised independent living placement (SILP) now for over 8 months. Prior to entering the pilot, JD had a history of running the streets, AWOLing from placements, and associating with inappropriate people. She is now in full compliance with AB 12 regulations, working part-time at Walmart, and enrolled in school. She no longer requires intensive

services, and has learned how to secure community resources on her own. She reaches out to her support system as needed, which includes her former foster mother and DCFS.

- JE has been stable in her placement for over 7 months. Before entering the pilot, JE had over 20 placements and experienced 3 hospitalizations. She had a history of AWOLing from placements and exhibiting inappropriate behavior. Although JE still requires ongoing support, she will be transitioning to a lower level of services in the next month. JE has been attending school regularly, has had no AWOLs or behavior issues since beginning this placement, and she has become very good at advocating for herself. JE is currently undergoing hormone treatment at Children's Hospital of Los Angeles.

**GOAL 4: WELL-BEING** *Ensure that system-involved youth achieve the physical, emotional, and social health needed to be successful.*

#### **Education Coordinating Council (ECC) Efforts**

- Continuing to partner with DCFS, Los Angeles County school districts, and LACOE to develop processes and policies for implementing the foster youth school-stability provisions included in the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA). The ECC, DCFS, LACOE, and LAUSD are implementing a transportation pilot to keep foster youth in their schools of origin. The pilot, which has been extended through June 30, 2019, is intended to be a “bridge solution” and learning opportunity as long-term transportation agreements between DCFS and the districts are finalized.
  - ✧ The ESSA Transportation Workgroup, which is convened by the ECC and LACOE and includes multiple public and private stakeholders, has finalized a transportation-plan template that will be used to negotiate long-term interagency agreements between DCFS and the County's 80 school districts.
  - ✧ Secured \$60,000 of philanthropic funding to hire an outreach coordinator to facilitate the negotiation of final agreements between DCFS and the school districts. Also secured an additional \$90,000 (for a total of \$150,000) to provide additional capacity for processing the hundreds of weekly new-placement or placement-change notifications that affect which school youth attend; this is meant as a bridge until the agency is able to increase its capacity for this in the fall
  - ✧ Other counties such as San Diego, Ventura, and Santa Clara are now using our contracted vendor, HopSkipDrive, to help serve hundreds of foster youth across these regions to get to their schools of origin.
- Made progress toward greater access to accurate and consistent education data for foster youth
  - ✧ All 80 school districts have now signed an MOU with LACOE for sharing data with LACOE's electronic education data system, the Education Passport System



(EPS); this agreement creates a single point for school districts and other users to access and share education data on foster youth.

- ✧ The Juvenile Court and LACOE are working through system logistics for providing judicial officers with electronic access to EPS.
- Progress has been made toward providing access to the region's comprehensive health record system, the Los Angeles Network for Enhanced Services (LANES), for PHNs who are helping to coordinate health care for DCFS youth. These PHNs will be able to use the LANES portal to view timely health records for their child welfare clients, as appropriate, to coordinate care and ensure effective treatment.
  - ✧ County Counsel, DCFS, DPH, and LANES have agreed to providing this access, and are developing a Data Participation Agreement and discussing a fee structure. It is anticipated that this access will be available for the PHNs in early 2019.
- The ECC is partnering with FosterEd to improve college readiness in the Antelope Valley.
  - ✧ Four education liaisons are now co-located in the Antelope Valley, two in the Antelope Valley Union High School District (working between four high schools) and two in the Lancaster School District (working at the middle school).
  - ✧ These FosterEd education liaisons are providing teaming and intensive supports, as well as serving as education champions for the system-involved youth in these schools.
- Helped to develop a healing-informed arts education pilot for middle and high schools with high numbers of foster and probation youth; this pilot is based on a successful model currently existing within probation halls and camps that was created by the Arts for Incarcerated Youth Network (AIYN), the Los Angeles County Arts Commission (LACAC), and the Probation Department.
  - ✧ The ECC, LACAC, AIYN, and DMH are finalizing an MOU for this project that includes detailed procedures for using arts education as a strategy to build protective factors for foster, probation, and at-risk youth within middle and high schools, and leveraging MHSA-PEI funding to do so.
  - ✧ This 2-year pilot project is expected to serve almost 2,000 youth. Preliminary analysis has identified potential schools within the following school districts as likely candidates for inclusion in this pilot: Antelope Valley Union High School District, Long Beach Unified School District, LAUSD, and Pomona Unified School District.
  - ✧ The pilot is projected to begin in January 2019.

## **County Medical Hubs**

- Partnering with DCFS, the Health Agency, DHS, DMH, and DPH to determine gaps and help improve access to timely health and dental exams for DCFS-supervised youth
  - ✧ Completed an analysis of 3 months of Hub referral and service data to determine whether departments are in compliance with providing DCFS youth a forensic exam or an initial medical exam (IME) within specified policy timelines, along with other important metrics to identify potential service and policy gaps
    - Using data results to guide conversations with key partners about how best to address Hub capacity issues, ensure that core services are delivered in a timely manner, and clarify department and Hub policies
    - Concurrent efforts are underway to develop short- and long-term plans for improving capacity at the High Desert Hub in partnership with DHS, DCFS, and the Health Agency.
  - ✧ Brokered collaborations between the Hubs and their corresponding P&As, so that DHS Hub, general pediatric, and emergency department providers will refer families for an array of supportive services to the P&A in their communities, when needed
  - ✧ Working with DCFS, DPH, DHS, and the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), to develop a plan for increasing the number of foster youth receiving dental screenings and exams, when needed, within policy timeframes
    - Convened representatives from key health data systems (e.g., EM Hub, ORCHID, and LANES) and a newly proposed L.A. Dental Registry funded by UCLA to begin discussing ways for improving coordination across medical and dental referrals
    - Working with DCFS and DHS to add language about oral health care screenings to existing Hub forms, so that data can be more accurately tracked on when youth are referred for needed dental exams

## **Mental Health Assessment Coordination**

- Partnering with DMH, DCFS, and stakeholders on the coordination and delivery of front-end mental health screenings and assessments for DCFS-involved youth to streamline the overall process for children and families
  - ✧ Developed a process map of current front-end mental health assessments and timelines that will be used for determining how best to coordinate and streamline these processes, where needed
    - Working with partners to figure out how new Continuum of Care Reform (CCR) requirements—such as the Child Adolescent Needs and Strengths

(CANS) assessment—will be used in Child and Family Teams and included in information presented to the court

- ✧ Planned an August 2018 convening of departmental leadership and key stakeholders to learn about Illinois' Integrated Assessment model, which efficiently coordinates screening, assessment (including mental health, health, and dental), and case planning for DCFS youth

### **Addressing Psychotropic Medication Use in Child Welfare**

- Continuing to oversee the implementation of the revised and newly developed protocols that went into effect in April 2017 for approving and monitoring the use of psychotropic medication for youth in out-of-home care that were created in partnership with the Juvenile Court, DMH, DCFS, Probation, and multiple stakeholders; these protocols support revised Judicial Council forms that include more comprehensive information about youths' histories, behavior, and alternative treatments and/or other services received
- ✧ Conducting random reviews of files for dependent or delinquent children/youth taking psychotropic medications to evaluate the effectiveness of the newly revised approval and monitoring processes
- ✧ Working with DCFS and Probation to develop data reports on the use of psychotropic medication with system-involved youth in Los Angeles County that would be provided to the Board quarterly
- ✧ Working with stakeholders to determine how best to prepare TAY to make medical decisions for themselves once they reach the age of majority. The workgroup developed a multi-agency proposal for ensuring that these youth are properly and consistently prepared to make these decisions.
  - DCFS, Probation and DPH have agreed to implement a Psychotropic Medication Youth Engagement Worksheet that will help to ensure that youth are engaged in discussions about their medication usage and are prepared to make appropriate medication decisions on their own behalf once they reach the age of majority.

**GOAL 5: CROSS-CUTTING STRATEGIES** *Rethink structures, programs, and processes, on an ongoing basis, that impact multiple entities, to take advantage of new thinking and learning that meaningfully improves our child protection system.*

### **Dual-Status Youth Motion**

- On March 20, 2018, the Board directed the OCP, in collaboration with multiple County stakeholders and others, to report back on a countywide plan for dual-status youth.
- ✧ Workgroup meetings began in June to address the Board's directive with all relevant stakeholders.

- ✧ Subcommittees will engage in intensive work on preventing the initial delinquency of youth in child welfare, and to review the joint 241.1 multidisciplinary team assessment.
- ✧ The dual-status work is also being coordinated with the OCP's Prevention Workgroup and the Youth Diversion & Development Steering Committee within the Office of Diversion and Re-entry.
- DCFS and Probation provided data on the numbers of crossover and dual-status youth from 2016 to the present that was shared with the Dual-Status Youth Workgroup; discussions are ongoing about continuing to collect and track this data.

### **Partnership Conference**

- Worked with the Juvenile Court and California State University, Los Angeles (CSULA), to reinstate the longtime County Partnership Conference at CSULA. This conference, which first occurred in 1995, annually brought together about 1,000 child welfare and juvenile justice stakeholders to participate in workshops and hear keynote speakers on relevant subject-matter topics.
- ✧ The renamed 18th Annual Dr. Hershel Swinger Partnership Conference was held on June 7, 2018, at CSULA. More than 800 attendees represented all entities involved in child welfare and juvenile justice in Los Angeles County.
- ✧ Over 30 informative workshops and two plenary sessions were held, including a plenary session with DCFS Director Bobby Cagle and Chief Probation Officer Terri McDonald.
- ✧ CSPPP helped to raise over \$25,000 from the philanthropic community to fund the conference.

### **Additional OCP Activities**

- Presented the OCP's prevention plan, *Paving the Road to Safety for Our Children*, and its current implementation status to Representative Judy Chu's staff at a meeting hosted by DCFS on May 3, 2018
- Presented at the Child Welfare System Improvement Plan (SIP) Conference held on May 3, 2018, on the dual-status motion
- Presented at the Child Welfare Council meeting on June 13, 2018 in Sacramento on the upfront family-finding pilot
- Continued to assist DCFS with its Children's Trust Fund Request For Statement of Interest for contracting with a community provider to manage monetary and in-kind donations; the process for selecting a vendor is still underway.

In summary, the OCP is working hard to accomplish its goals, as are the relevant County departments and a host of key community partners. We look forward to reporting further progress in our next quarterly update. The Center for Strategic Public-Private Partnerships will submit a separate update to the Board in August 2018.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me at (213) 893-1152 or via email at [mnash@ocp.lacounty.gov](mailto:mnash@ocp.lacounty.gov), or your staff may contact Carrie Miller at (213) 893-0862 or via email at [cmiller@ocp.lacounty.gov](mailto:cmiller@ocp.lacounty.gov).

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